Love is God

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/11079174.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	Underage
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Hannibal (TV), Heathers (1988)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Garrett Jacob Hobbs, Abigail Hobbs, Mason Verger, Alana Bloom, Margot Verger, Tobias Budge, Franklyn Froideveaux, Francis Dolarhyde, Dr. Frederick Chilton, Will Graham's Father
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - High School, Consensual Underage Sex, Alcohol, Murder, Murder-Suicide, Suicide Attempt, Attempted Sexual Assault, Bottom Will Graham, Top Hannibal, First Time, Bullying, Homophobic Language, Based on a Musical, But no singing, Hannibal is Not a Cannibal, Teen Will Graham, Teen Hannibal, teen almost everyone, Recreational Drug Use, Underage Drinking, Underage Drug Use, Anal Sex, Anal Fingering, Oral Sex
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2017-06-03 Updated: 2018-02-11 Words: 14,461 Chapters: 7/?

Love is God

by GhostGurlGamer

Summary

Will Graham has just become part of the most popular clique at Westerburg High, but he disapproves of the other members' cruel behavior. When Will and his new, rebel boyfriend, Hannibal, confront clique leader Garret Jacob Hobbs and accidentally poison him, they make it appear a suicide. Soon, Will Graham realizes that Hannibal has more devious plans for the students at Westerburg High. Will he warn the other students of Hannibal's plot? Or is Will too far deep into the dark underbelly of the school to do anything? And does he even want to?

Notes

Let me preface this by saying I haven't written a fanfic since high school. That was 10 years ago. So I'm a bit rusty.
That being said, I love music and musicals. Recently, I've been compiling a list of songs I believe fit different fandoms, including Hannibal. During my musical voyage, I stumbled across the soundtrack for "Heathers the Musical." I remember seeing the film version when I was young, and do not know how I missed the musical adaptation that was released a few years ago.

For some reason, while listening to the soundtrack, I kept picturing Will and Hannibal as Veronica and JD. Eventually, after many months of deliberation, I decided that this crossover needed to exist, that I was envisioning these scenes for a reason.

So without further ado, I present my first fanfic in years! In attempting to mesh two stories together in a crossover, I tried to make the characters as close to canon personalities as possible. Some liberties have also been taken with plot points.

All comments and critiques are VERY much appreciated and highly encouraged. This work in not beta'd, so if you spot a typo, grammar/spelling error, of if the wording feels off or doesn't flow, let me know in the comments below!

Thank you.

Regarding Each Chapter: I will post a link to the song from the musical for each so you can listen and get the general feeling, should you so desire.

Beautiful

Beautiful

Seventeen going on eighteen. That year always seems to stretch on longer than any other. And that is especially true for Senior Will Graham.

Westerburg High, located just on the outer edge of Baltimore, was as stereotypical a high school as one could expect – with clichéd cliques and apathetic teachers and nosy parents pretending concern. It is a stereotype for a reason, after all. There were the jocks, who partied with the cheerleaders, who got their drugs and booze from the stoners, who cheated off of the homework the nerds and geeks did, who thanked their lucky stars that the Goth kids preferred to be left alone. Will Graham, however, was an outlier. He never particularly fit in with any one group. His style had remained relatively consistent starting in junior high, composed of long-sleeved flannels in simple plaids and loose jeans grabbed haphazardly from a thrift store rack. His hair was an impenetrable jungle of messy, rich chocolate curls that if tamed would be the envy of every girl at school. Finishing off the "slightly disturbed loser" look, Will had taken to wearing prescription-less glasses sophomore year to help avoid making eye contact with his peers.

Senior year of high school was promising to be just as torturous as years previous. Will had already been called every conceivable insult in the book: "Slut!" (He was a virgin), "Homo!" (Did you not get the virgin thing?), "Poser!" (Who was he trying to copy, exactly?), "White Trash!" (Okay, they got him there). During that first "welcome back" week, he had had his lunch money stolen and his head rammed on a locker door. Better than last year, at least, when he had been shoved *into* the locker and left there all first period.

Outlier though he may be, Will Graham was not completely without respite.

"Will!"

The lovely creature squeezing her way through the morning hallway crowds toward him was one of his very few friends, Alana Bloom. Alana Bloom was not in any way an outlier like him. With her luscious locks, flawless skin, and perfectly plump pout, she rivaled the most beautiful girls at Westerburg High. She was lower on the totem pole only because she was friends with a reject like Will. They'd been friends since Will had moved from New Orleans to Baltimore back in Kindergarten, and Alana had refused to let a silly thing like social status tear them apart.

In fact, many of the kids in Will's classes had all been friends back then, before the concept of class and wealth and cool had transformed their pathetic, little lives.

"Are we still on for movie night?" Alana nudged him with her dainty elbow.

"Yeah. You are on popcorn detail. Bev might swing by with some brews."

Alana giggled, "Sounds good. We're watching 'American Psycho.'"

"Again? What is with you and the serial killer movies?"

“They’re fascinating! You know I want to study criminal psychology! And besides,” Alana grinned mischievously, “Christian Bale is hot.”

Will replied with his trademark eye-roll, baby-blues reaching for the sky. Christian Bale was, truth be told, hot. Of course, being labeled “gay” on top of everything else was not exactly Will’s idea of a good time. Nine months – he only had to wait nine, measly months to get out. He had applied for early admittance to George Washington University, where Will wasn’t sure if he wanted to join Alana in studying criminology or perhaps try his hand at behavioral psychology. Regardless, college meant freedom from the hell that was high school.

Alana and Will huddled together near Will’s locker, chatting and attempting to be as out of the way as possible before first bell. Of course, the day couldn’t possibly start off good, not for loser Will Graham. Just as he turned to reach for his textbooks from the locker, Will was rudely shoved backward into the metal door. His glasses slipped down his delicate nose and papers went flying.

“Oops! Watch it, nerd!”

“Yeah, watch it, freak!”

Tobias Budge, and his ever-present shadow, Franklyn Froideveaux. Who else would take pleasure in spoiling Will’s tentative calm?

Tobias was a perfect specimen of high school bully – handsome, wealthy, and Quarterback of the varsity football team. Intense chocolate eyes and a faux smile, he could have gotten away with murder if the idea ever struck him. Not that Tobias had many ideas in general, apart from throwing lavish parties and terrorizing those he deemed beneath him (Will being a regular favorite).

His little minion, Franklyn, worshipped the ground Tobias spit on. Franklyn was also a member of the football team (second string). Bumbling and sniveling, and not the brightest crayon in the box, if Tobias asked Franklyn to jump, Franklyn would build the damn bridge himself.

“Oh look, it’s the future gas station attendant and his only customer,” Will muttered under his breath.

Not quiet enough.

“What was that?” Tobias questioned mockingly, “I’m sorry, did I hit you? What a tragedy.” His laughter was like velveteen – you know, the fake velvet that never feels quite as good as the real stuff.

Franklyn joined in, “Yeah, freak. Pick up these papers. Someone might slip.”

Both boys laughed as they continued down the hallway. Will sighed and bent down to gather his belongings, shoving his glasses back up his nose. Alana eagerly reached down to help.

“Why don’t you fight back, Will?” She employed, large doe eyes fixed on him in concern.

Wasn't that the question of the year? One of many. One many others, Will besides, had. *"Why do they hate me?" "Why won't he date me?" "Why do I cry myself to sleep?" "Why, why, why?"* It was often a great source of discomfort for Will, these pleading, desperate emotions threatening to overwhelm him at times. Empathy might serve him well in adulthood, but not here.

Will had a snarky comment prepared in response to his best friend's innocent question, but Alana's soft gasp stilled his words. Turning to where her eyes were fixed, Will watched in equal awe as the students parted like the Red Sea.

Through the hallway, floating about it all, was the Shrikes.

Abigail Hobbs – head cheerleader, sweet and bubbly and liked by all. But then again, the student body had never seen Abigail out in the woods, hunting prey, trademark scarf billowing in the wind like a vengeful goddess.

Mason Verger – his family was loaded, owning the largest meatpacking plant on the continental United States. Mason was known for two things: the fact that his parents allowed him to get plastic surgery at age 13 to fix scarring to his face, and the slightly (strike that, extremely) inappropriate way he kept his baby sister, Margot, under his thumb.

And then there was Garret. Jacob. Hobbs. Abigail's cousin. Leader of the Shrikes. A mythic man. Student body president, Garret was actually a pretty nice guy, overall. Not as cruel and vicious as Mason, but he ruled the school with a calm, menacing presence. No one questioned Garret. He had a thing for petite brunettes, with striking blue eyes, ivory skin, and plush pouts. No one dared mention that his conquests looked an awful like his cousin, Abigail.

Will and Alana and the rest of the teenagers littering the hall had only minutes to bask in the presence of the Shrikes. The bell rang, signaling first period. Alana waved a quick goodbye to Will and dashed away. Will continued to gather his fallen papers and books, eyes tracking the movements of the Shrikes. Mason and Garret dipped into the men's room, with Abigail posting guard outside. She briefly caught Will's stare and sent a timid smile his way. Will quickly averted his gaze.

From behind him, Will heard the distinct sound of knock-off leather shoes clipping the tiled floor down the hallway. The angle of the locker door prevented him being noticed as Frederick Chilton barreled towards Abigail, who banged quickly on the bathroom door. Mason and Garret quickly emerged to join the young lady.

Will knew he had to act fast.

"What a surprise. Garret, Abigail, and Mason. Perhaps you didn't hear the bell. You're late for class."

"Sorry, Mr. Chilton-"

"That's *Doctor* Chilton," he snapped, quick to remind the children. Dr. Chilton was always ready to flaunt his credentials, ill earned as they were. Who cared that he had an MD? The

man taught high school psychology for fuck's sake! And not even the advanced course!

"Right, Dr. Chilton," Garret sounded sincere in his words, but Will felt the sarcasm dripping through each syllable, "Mason wasn't feeling well, we were helping him."

"Not without a hall pass, you're not."

During this exchange, Will had scrambled to grab a pen and old hall pass that had been carelessly thrown into his locker at one point. A quick scribble here and there, and ta dah! An up-to-date hall pass.

Will thrust the sheet towards Dr. Chilton, still averting his gaze from all involved.

"Actually, Dr. Chilton, sir, we are all out on a hall pass. All four of us," Will hesitated, but not enough that it was noticeable, "Yearbook committee."

Dr. Chilton scrutinized the slip with beady eyes. Will's heart caught in his chest. The Shrikes watched intently.

With a resigned sigh, Dr. Chilton conceded, "You are all listed, I see. Alright, off you go." And with that, Dr. Chilton handed the hall pass back to Will and turned on his heels and marched self-importantly away.

Will released a breath he hadn't been aware of holding. His relief was rapidly overshadowed by a wave of anxiety as the Shrikes crowded around him. Garret gingerly pulled the paper from Will's trembling grasp. Holding it to the light, he uttered, "This is a good forgery. Who are you?"

It took a brief second for Will to realize he had been addressed, "Uh. Will. Graham. I… crave a boon." Yes, that did sound as stupid out loud as Will thought it did.

Garret, Abigail, and Mason stood awaiting further explanation from Will. Will found himself staring at the buttons on Garret's jacket as he scrambled to put into words his request, "Um… let me sit at lunch with you guys, just once! No talking necessary. If people think you three tolerate me, then they'll leave me alone."

After a moment of surprised silence, the Shrikes burst out into bitter laughter.

Will steeled himself, "I also do report cards, permission slips… you name it. Each one, someone else's design. Not my design, but I can do it."

Mason and Abigail continued to snicker, but Hobbs suddenly stilled, contemplative. Stepping closer into Will's space, he peered down at him, eyes trailing over each curve and angle of his face and body. It wasn't sexual, but it was still penetrating. "Quite the imagination you, have," he drawled, "to be able to make such decent copies. And, believe it or not, you aren't half bad looking. Good bone structure."

"And a symmetrical face," Abigail chimed in, not wishing to be forgotten by her dear cousin, "If I took a meat cleaver and sliced your face in half, the two parts would be near identical."

“The clothes and glasses got to go, though,” Mason concurred, sparing Will a passing glance.

“Well, what do you say, Will? We fix you up a bit, you use that brilliant imagination of yours for us, and you get to hang with the Shrikes,” Garret clapped one comforting hand on Will’s shoulder, attempting to force the young man to look him in the eyes, “Deal?”

Will was unprepared for this outcome. The Shrikes were inviting him, him, into their elite circle. Slowly bringing his blue eyes up to meet Hobbs’, Will was suddenly overcome with a feeling of dread. For a brief, imperceptible second, Garret’s face was ashen and death-like. Just like that, the vision was gone, and all Will could manage was,

“Okay.”

The next day, the students of Westerburg High milled about before class as normal. Alana waited patiently near Will’s locker. It was rare that the boy was ever tardy, and he hadn’t returned any of Alana’s phone calls. He’d completely flaked on movie night, which, again, was not like the Will Graham she knew. Something must have happened – good or bad, Alana could not say.

A clamor of voices, chattering in hushed, excited whispers, drew Alana’s attention toward the main door. In all their splendor came the Shrikes – Abigail Hobbs, Mason Verger, Garret Jacob Hobbs, and-

“Will!?”

Candy Store

Chapter Notes

No, I don't know the details of the “Science Lab Cover-Up Incident”.

Candy Store

Four weeks – a whole, glorious month – of being in with the Shrikes, and Will had never felt a greater sense of calm. The fitted slacks and tailored button-down shirts were a little itchy at times, but looking at himself in the mirror, Will felt… well… attractive! The Shrikes (Abigail in particular) had taken him to a salon to get his tresses tamed, to pick out a whole new wardrobe (courtesy of Mason’s father’s credit card), and his glasses had been ceremonially trashed. The other students looked at Will with a mixture of jealousy and longing. Will could still feel the tendrils of their anxiety battering at his mind’s walls, but the shield he’d built up by hanging with the Shrikes helped ease some of it. He and Abigail had even secretly gone fishing. The girl was damn good at it, and Will found himself pleasantly surprised that she wasn’t as superficial as he’d first thought.

Even with his newfound popularity, Will still preferred the intimate companionship of a quiet night in. One person he’d failed to initiate such bonding time with in quite a while was Alana. Today, Will promised himself to seek her out, and around lunchtime, he did so.

Alana, Beverly Katz, and Jimmy Price and Brian “Zee” Zeller were gathered at one of the round, corner tables in the cafeteria, chatting enthusiastically about something or other. Bev and Will were tight, ever since the “Science Lab Cover-Up Incident” way back in freshman year. Will didn’t know Jimmy and Zee other than as acquaintances of Bev. He’d seen them once when Will had thought to join A.V. Club. The two men were more an old married couple than friends, and Will quickly realized the realm of audios and visuals was a two-man zone.

“Will! Hey there!” Alana lit up as Will sauntered over.

“Nice of you to remember the little guys, down here off your perch,” Bev chastised, but the coy spark in her eyes and the upturn of her mouth betrayed her teasing.

“Pull up a seat, man, tell us about hanging with the Shrikes! Did you plow Abigail?” Zee leaned in delightedly.

Jimmy soundly smacked the back of his head, “Brian, don’t be such a pervert!”

“What!? She’s the only one of those three worth looking at… well, four now if you count Will.”

“Sorry I missed movie night this week, Alana,” Will ignored the two boys continuing to bicker.

Alana blushed slightly, “It’s alright, Will. I’m just glad to see you looking… happy. And you look… really good, actually.”

Will’s cheeks flushed red at the praise. He was still not completely comfortable with the attention.

“Yeah, well,” it was moments like these when the original Will Graham bled through, “We’re totally on for this weekend, right?”

Alana nodded.

“Bev?”

Bev shook her head, “No way, man, this week is the annual Verger Homecoming rager! You’ll have to be there, Graham. No way you are skipping this year.”

Will had completely forgotten about the party, “Oh shit, yeah. Uh…” he glanced at Alana, who was crestfallen, despite her understanding smile. Will may have been able to scramble his way to the top, but he’d been unable to drag Alana along for the ride.

“Alana- “

“Don’t worry about it, Will!” she straightened up slightly, “You go have fun. We’ll catch up some other time!”

Will was about declare his intention to screw the party all together in favor of spending the weekend with Alana, when a sharp tug pulled his attention away. Mason spun Will to face him, hands squeezing Will’s clavicle in a vice, “Will. Table. Pronto.”

Will had hardly any time to respond before he was dragged away from his friends, but he certainly didn’t miss the daggers Mason stared into Alana.

Hobbs sat atop their usual table near the window, Abigail between his legs, leaning back against him, as he stroked her hair. The sunlight streaming in bathed them in a golden glow, and the picture painted was downright domestic bliss.

“Ah, Will!” Garret flashed Will a gentle smile, gingerly lifting Abigail up from her position to sit beside him, making room for Will on the bench below.

Will took his place on the bench, and Mason passed Garret a slip of paper before propping against the wall next to them, arms crossed across his chest, and a vicious scowl replaced the usual smugness.

Garret placed before Will a pen, blank paper, and the slip Mason had handed him, “Will, I need you to take a dictation for me in this handwriting style.”

Abigail leaned over watching Will scribble the words steadily, a perfect imitation of the flowery script that was his model.

“Hey cutie, I’ve noticed you in the hallways, and can’t seem to stop thinking about you,” Hobbs put a special emphasis in his speech.

Mason’s scowl was again transformed as the letter was drafted, into something akin to a smile, but with more venom.

Hobbs continued, “I was really hoping you’d be able to make it to the Homecoming party this year. I’ll be looking for you. Yours- “

“No! Put ‘always yours!’” Abigail chirped.

“Always yours,” Hobbs amended, “Margot.”

Mason snorted, “And put a little ‘XO’ after!”

Will placed the final flourishes on the fake admirer note. Satisfied with his work, he inquired, “Okay, a love note. Who’s this for, anyway?”

“We just found out Alana Bloom has a huge lady boner for Mason’s sister.”

“Stupid bitch,” Mason spat.

“What!? NO!” Will jumped to his feet, clutching the note to his chest. Of course he knew Alana had a crush on Margot Verger. The two girls had worked on a project together and seemed to really hit it off. Alana would have pursued something more meaningful, perhaps, but Mason always seemed to be lurking nearby, threatening potential suitors with anything from bodily harm to social ruin. “This will devastate her when she finds out it’s fake!”

“Oh come on, Will, it will give her shower nozzle masturbation material, for days!” Abigail cooed.

“Serves that skank right for even thinking she could dare look at my sister,” Mason spewed, fire coating each word.

Hobbs had soundlessly maneuvered behind Will, and deftly plucked the forgery from Will’s hand, “Are we gonna have a problem, Will?” he asked, all innocence, “Come on.”

Hobbs lead Abigail and Mason from the lunchroom to the lockers, Will desperately scrambling after.

“What good will this do? It’s a harmless crush!” Will’s pleas fell on deaf ears.

The group strode over to Alana’s locker. The lunch period was nearly over. Will had only moments to get the letter back. He made one more mad grasp for it, and was quickly

incapacitated by a short punch into his solar plexus, courtesy of Mason. Doubling over in pain, gasping for air, Will looked up at the Shrikes. All three were covered in shadow, and as before, Will could almost smell the blood dripping off them. Their blood, his blood, Alana's blood.

"Will," Hobbs' voice was soothing, "Now there's no need for that. Don't you think that, if given the chance, Alana would do the same? She's as manipulative as anyone else here. You just happen to have skills she doesn't possess. And so, here you are." With that, Hobbs' slid the fake note into Alana's locker.

Not a minute later, the bell signaling the next period went off. The Shrikes left Will where he stood, quite pleased with themselves. The three moved down the hallway to a distant row of lockers within eyesight of Alana's locker, and watched intently. Will felt their cold gaze, judging him. What would be his next move? Would he prove himself worthy of being a Shrike?

Will knew the combination to Alana's locker. In his panic, he fiddled with the lock, missing the numbers once, twice, a third time.

"What are you doing, Will?"

Alana's melodious voice made will freeze, a deer in the headlights.

"Did you need to borrow one of my books, again?" Alana nimbly slid between Will and the locker and popped open the door, the precariously placed note fluttering to the ground.

'Don't read that.'

Will's mouth was dry. The words screamed in his brain, but only pained breath escaped him.

'Alana… I…'

Alana read over the note. Her deep, azure eyes widening in disbelief.

"Oh my god! Will! Look!" She thrust the note under Will's nose, "Margot Verger invited me to her Homecoming party! I thought she'd forgotten all about me!" It was the most joy Will had ever seen emanating from his dear friend.

'Tell her.'

"Oh Will, I… I'm so happy," Alana's eyes shimmered with unshed tears.

"That's…" Will spotted the Shrikes watching him from afar, judging as gods judge mere mortals of their worth, "That's… great. Alana. I… guess I'll see you this weekend then…"

Alana embraced Will in a tight hug. When was the last time Will had hugged anyone? He couldn't bring himself to return the embrace. He was an accomplice in this cruel charade. He didn't have the right to share in Alana's happiness.

As Alana merrily skipped away, the taunting note tucked carefully away into her purse as if precious cargo, the Shrikes descended upon Will as their namesake bird would have.

“Well done, Will Graham! I was not expecting that out of you,” Mason clapped Will on the back, rather more roughly than was necessary.

“Yeah! Oh man, this is going to be so good!” Abigail squealed.

“Indeed. See you at the party, Will,” Hobbs nodded his approval to Will before the three Shrikes melded away into the ocean of students.

Fight For Me

Chapter Notes

I love picturing young Hannibal in his suits. Looking so dapper, even as a moody teenager.

Fight For Me

Will's head was spinning. What had he done? Thrown his best friend (and for many years previously only friend) to the wolves. Shoulders hunched, Will curled his arms around himself. Was it a desperate attempt to keep warm? It wasn't cold. Was it a mimicry of the hug Alana had bestowed upon him? In that moment, the new, almost proud Will Graham shriveled away, and the sad, pathetic young shell of a man remained.

"That was terribly poor form of you."

A heavily accented voice broke Will out of his self-loathing.

"Excuse me?" Will swiveled around to come face to face with an unfamiliar boy. Hair parted perfectly, the young man (for he was certainly *not* a boy) peered directly into Will's eyes, amber reflecting into icy pools. It was almost enough to distract Will from the school uniform the young man wore. Their school wasn't some fancy private academy, so the beige suit and blood-red tie were glaringly out of place. But he wore it with an ease no one Will had ever known could ever hope to accomplish.

"My apologies, I did not mean to eavesdrop. However, I could not help sensing your distress. If it pained you so," the stoic boy continued, "then why allow it to occur?"

Will finally tore his gaze away from the teen, but only because his neck was aching from being held so stiffly at an upward angle – the kid was only a few inches taller, but his commanding presence demanded subservience, and thus Will felt smaller than he should.

When Will didn't respond, the boy proceeded in his summation, "Clearly, it upset you to do such a thing to what I can assume was your friend. I suspect some underlying desire to appear more socially adjusted prevented your divulging the truth."

"Are… are you psychoanalyzing me?" Will finally found his voice. It cracked slightly, as it had when the demon puberty had struck two years ago. "Don't do that. You wouldn't like me when I'm psychoanalyzed."

The young man shrugged elegantly (what normal kid can *shrug elegantly?*) and turned on his heels to venture away.

“Hey,” Will shouted after him, “You can’t just drop some deep shit like that and walk away! I didn’t catch your name!”

“I did not throw it,” the young man called back over his shoulder.

Will was stunned. This boy was slowly crawling up under his skin, and he didn’t quite care for it. “Well, maybe I don’t care to know. It’s not like I find you that interesting.”

“You will.”

Will watched as the young man took a few more steps away, when suddenly, Tobias and his loyal puppy Franklyn barged past him, shoving the boy back slightly. Even with the accosting, the foreign kid maintained a cool composure.

“Hey, watch where you’re stepping, freak!” Tobias snapped.

The young man clasped his hands regally behind his back, “My apologies, I was unaware you had exclusive rights to the hallway.”

Tobias was momentarily speechless, so Franklyn naturally piped up, “Oh, man, let’s kick his ass, Tobias!”

Tobias had reeled back his anger and pushed Franklyn back behind him, taking the alpha position in confronting the boy in the well-tailored suit, “No, Franklyn, we’re seniors now. We’re too old for such… juvenile endeavors,” Tobias broke out into a cat-like grin, “So, darling, did your boyfriend cry like a baby when you moved from France?”

A few of the students in the hall chuckled maliciously, observing the growing altercation with the glee of spectators at a gladiator match.

When the boy failed to reply, Franklyn shoved him back, “My friend asked you a question, loser!”

Will, viewing from a slight distance, watched as the young man’s hands twitched slightly behind his back, as if stretching, flexing, preparing.

“Hey Franklyn,” Tobias smirked, “Doesn’t this school have a no fags policy?”

“I am not aware of any, though they do seem to have an open door policy on the rude and mentally disabled,” the boy’s rich baritone cut like a knife.

That was the final straw for Tobias, his carefully constructed cool falling away to violent rage. Winding up, he threw a hard punch at the young man’s face. Franklyn had, in that time, scurried around behind him to block any escape. The young man ducked deftly below the right hook, and jabbed one fist into Tobias’ exposed stomach. Franklyn lunged and managed to grab a hold of the teen’s smartly pressed jacket, however, the imposing youth landed a swift kick backward into Franklyn’s knee, sending him sprawling backward.

The students of Westerburg High formed a crudely shaped circle around the three fighters, chants of “Fight!” and “Holy shit!” bouncing through the hallways.

Tobias, by this point, had recovered from the unexpected blow, and reached up in an attempt to place the newcomer into a chokehold. He managed to get one hand around, before the boy sunk his crooked fangs into the meaty flesh of Tobias’ hand.

This flurry of violence – poetry in motion really – was out of time for Will Graham. For him, time suddenly stood still. Will was not your typical 17-year-old boy. While gore and blood and murder secretly excited him, the idea of grown men engaging in fisticuffs seemed practically Neanderthal. But this boy, this glorious specimen of a real man. All Will Graham could think was,

‘Daaaaamn.’

Arousal pooled in his gut, threatening to makes its presence known lower and harder. This no-name kid had indeed accurately predicted that, yes, Will did in fact find him interesting.

‘What would it be like, if a guy like that fought for me…’

As the students hollered and whooped over the dramatic display of testosterone, Will suddenly pictured himself center stage, holding Tobias still, while the handsome youth laid into him, landing blow after blow, until both he and Will were drenched in the offender’s blood.

Will’s beautiful hallucination was quickly brought to a halt, as Principal Crawford burst on the scene, voice booming, “ENOUGH! All of you get to class, and you three,” he yanked a dazed Franklyn to his feet, “My office, NOW!”

The upstart in the beige suit adjusted his jacket, straightened his tie, and quickly rearranged his ashen locks - not a strand out of place, as if he hadn’t just been grappling against two well built (okay, one, but Franklyn was *there*) men. He and Tobias followed begrudgingly behind the principal and disappeared into his office, but not before the kid sent one last glance back at Will.

Saturday arrived quickly, the day of the epic, legendary Verger Homecoming Party. Will had barely slept, and had been unable to focus on any assignments, mind consumed by thoughts of his betrayal of Alana, and more prominently, of the no-name kid who’d caused such a stir.

Will was waiting outside his home for the Shrikes to pick him up. He and his father had moved to Maryland when Will was very small. His mother had packed her things and left with nary a word, and there was no way they could afford continuing to live in their quaint home in New Orleans. Will barely remembered her. But Mr. Graham was a loving and doting single parent for Will, and any small comfort he could provide his son, he would move the stars themselves to do so.

“Your friends coming to get you, son?” Mr. Graham stepped out onto the front stoop and plopped himself down beside his only child, “Big party tonight, hm? I remember some of the crazy shit I did at your age.”

Will rolled his eyes, but smiled earnestly at his father. Mr. Graham worked six days a week, and picked up extra evening shifts when he could. This evening was one such night.

“You have the keys to the house. So, just be careful, and have fun, okay?” Mr. Graham looped one arm around his son’s shoulders and gave him a slight squeeze. “I’ll see you tomorrow when I get home, alright?”

“Of course, Daddy,” Will sighed.

At that moment, a hot red Porsche sedan screeched into view, parking itself on the street in front of the complex. Abigail, in the back seat, leaned out the window and waved exuberantly at Will. Hobbs sat in the front passenger seat, looking composed as always. Mason sat stoically behind the wheel.

“That’s my ride,” Will stood, straightening the collar on his maroon colored dress shirt.

Mr. Graham scanned the car and its occupants as he moved to stand with Will. He wouldn’t dare say so to his son, who seemed to enjoy the company of the three obviously wealthy teens, but Mr. Graham got a vibe from them, something he could not quite place his finger on. He grabbed Will’s arm before the boy could get too far and repeated, “Be careful, okay?”

“Yeah, Dad, I got it! See you tomorrow!” And with that, Will sprinted towards the vehicle and hopped into the back seat with Abigail.

The car peeled out and Mr. Graham watched it disappear around a corner, wishing he could protect his son from the horrors of the world. But Will would have to grow and learn some time.

“What the fuck, Will!” Abigail practically screamed.

The Shrikes’ first stop was the nearest convenient store to grab last minute snacks and supplies. Booze was being graciously provided by Mason’s parents, who were out of town for a business conference and could have cared less what their two children indulged in during their spare time.

Will cocked his head slightly, “What the fuck, what?”

“What my cousin so eloquently phrased was that the other day, you were practically throwing your tighty-whities at the new kid,” Hobbs explained, as if it were plainly obvious.

“And judging by your house, you can’t afford a new pair,” Mason cackled.

Will’s cheeks were as red as his shirt. When he didn’t immediately deny his attraction to the rebellious young man, Abigail broke the silence, “We’re not, like, weirded out that your gay

or anything."

"No, of course not, it's just that someone like that is clearly beneath us," Garret soothed, "You can do better."

"It's not like that," Will finally spoke up, "I didn't even get his name before that shit with Tobias and Franklyn."

The rest of the short dash to the convenient store was completed in stilted silence, broken up only by the pop fodder spewing from the radio.

Will, frantic to get some space away from the powerful Shrikes, jumped out of the vehicle almost before it came to a complete stop.

Mason handed him the black plastic card, "Grab some soda for mixers and some chips or something."

"Oh! Don't forget popcorn!" Abigail chirped, and Hobbs reached over the seat to pat her leg affectionately.

Will pocketed the credit card and entered the tiny mart. As he made his way toward the snack isle, a flash of amber caught his eye. Leaning out of the isle, he spotted, leaning gracefully against the slushy machine, the foreign boy. Will's heart stopped, but like an electric shock, the rich accent voice brought him back to life.

"What a pleasant surprise. Will Graham, we meet again."

Freeze You Brain

Chapter Notes

I made Hannibal Lecter drink a slushy! I feel so accomplished (and also slightly nervous).

Freeze Your Brain

“Will. Short for William? Yes?”

Will felt tremors travelling all through his bones. The young boy’s amber eyes stayed fixed to his. It was like staring into a dying sun, a black hole at the start of its birth, waiting to pull you into its gravitational death trap. Fighting to look at anything else, Will took in that the teen was decked out in another suit – a school uniform from a different preparatory facility maybe – this one a gorgeous deep navy with faint gray pin stripes. The complementing tie was clearly the boy’s own addition, as gray paisleys were in no way standard issue.

“Will. Short for Will,” he turned on the Will Graham charm, which was more of a skittish mongrel’s bark meant to keep intruders at bay. “Do you always dress like going to church? It’s Saturday, you know. No school.”

“I prefer to always place my best image forward when venturing out into the world,” the teen directed his attention toward the slush machine and proceeded to fill a large cup with green, sugary ooze, “May I offer to buy you an ice treat?”

Will could scarcely believe what he was seeing; here was this pristine, pompous child, imbibing one of the most caloric, fake creations under the vague term that was drink, “Does your mom know you partake of that garbage?”

“I will admit,” the boy tilted his head and allowed his thin lips to curl into a grimace, “Ever since coming to the States, I have developed a rather terrible obsession with these drinks. The cold reminds me of the winters of my childhood, I suppose. I usually take more care with what I place into my body. Did you say cherry, or lime?”

“I said, no thanks,” Will startled, coming to another realization, “How did you know my name?” He’d been so preoccupied with the boy’s strange mannerisms, that he almost missed that anomaly entirely.

“After our brief introduction yesterday, I may have taken liberties with the student files while waiting for Principal Crawford to deliver his wrath upon us,” the youth finished topping off

his unholy concoction of icy, cold, syrup and took a long, sensual suck from the over-sized straw.

“Yeah, sorry about those two assholes. I hope you didn’t get in too much trouble,” Will sheepishly fiddled with button on his cuffs.

“Never apologize for things beyond your control, Will,” the young man grabbed a cheap, paper napkin and daintily wiped the moisture that had gather around his mouth, “Principal Crawford was entirely understanding once I explained my actions were motivated by self-defense. Alas, with Tobias’ status as Quarterback, he was also given a much lighter punishment than was justified. Ah, but I am being terribly rude. I am Hannibal Lecter.” He extended his hand to Will.

Will gazed down at the offered hand – it was masculine, strong and large. Will’s imagination flared its ill-timed head, but Will pushed his unsavory thoughts back, taking Hannibal’s extended hand in his own.

“Hannibal. Nice to meet you. Pardon my forwardness, but you aren’t from around here, are you?”

“Very astute, Will,” Hannibal turned his attention back to his cherry and lime monstrosity. Will watched intently, as Hannibal’s lips wrapped around the white and red plastic tube and pulled. Was it possible to be jealous of an inanimate object? That lowly straw was the luckiest damn straw in the entire fucking straw universe, as far as Will was concerned.

Coming up for air, Hannibal expounded, “I am originally from Lithuania, however I recently traveled from France with my Uncle Robert. He and I have taken up residence here in Baltimore, as I plan to study at John Hopkins University next autumn. In fact, my place is right around the corner from here.”

“You live with your uncle?”

“My parents were taken from this world when I was much younger,” Hannibal supplied. Upon seeing the horror that graced Will’s face he chuckled, “Do not trouble yourself over it, Will. Death comes for us all, in the end. My family was simply touched by him sooner. So, Will- “

Hannibal and Will were both wrenched from their conversation by a loud, obnoxious horn blast from Mason’s Porsche outside.

“WILL! LET’S GET A MOVE ON!”

Hannibal’s eyes narrowed and he allowed his gaze to drift over Will’s shoulder to look upon the three children in the expensive car parked out front, “Might I ask why you associate with such classless heathens?”

Will is in that instance thankful he ventured into the store unaccompanied, because he can’t contain the sharp burst of laughter that weasels its way out of him, “The Shrikes? They aren’t

so terrible. Well, Abigail and Hobbs are… okay. You're new, so I guess you don't know the way things work around here.

"I know enough, Will. I know that those three are nothing more than snakes."

"Snakes?"

"Yes. Common variety snakes, slithering their way through life, assuming that people's fear of them will protect them, and that they will be free to thrive where others wither and fail."

"Well, if they are snakes, then what I am?" Will countered, unsure if he should feel insulted.

"You are the mongoose I want under the house when the snakes slither by."

Will's chilly, blue eyes locked once more with Hannibal's golden orbs. For one moment, just a moment, Will felt a darkness radiating off of Hannibal. Amber waves were replaced by near-black pits. Will wanted nothing more than to be completely consumed by the black void that was Hannibal Lecter. He'd never felt so stable, so safe. Even with the cloak of popularity to cover him, Will had never felt secure. Here, in the mini-mart, surrounded by processed junk food and three-dollar electronics that would break in a week's time, Will wanted to completely give himself to this man, damn the consequences.

"Care for a taste, Will?" Hannibal held out his partially drunken slush beverage. His grip around the cup was still tight. Will could see he didn't mean for Will to take the cup, but rather he was to suck down his salvation through the same lucky straw that had passed Hannibal's lips. He was to take communion at the altar of Lecter, the slushy his holy wine.

A delicate pink tongue flicked out to wet his lips. Leaning cautiously in, Will reached to take a sip of the slush.

He was abruptly yanked from his reverie by Hobbs' intimidating presence sneaking up behind him, "Will! We're going to be late, and you know Mason hates to be late!"

Garret flashed a charming grin in Hannibal's direction, which Hannibal returned with a polite nod, "I did not realize I was keeping you, Will. Perhaps we can continue this discussion another time." Hannibal wrapped his mouth around the straw and took one more long, deep sip. He gave Will another acknowledgement with his eyes and smoothly glided out and vanished into the growing dark as the sun began to set.

"You really shouldn't cohort with boys like that," Garret chastised Will as he loaded the still distracted man's arms up with an assortment of chips and snacks (not forgetting a large bag of butter-flavored popcorn for his beloved cousin), "Now let's go! We have a party to rule!"

Big Fun

Chapter Notes

This is what high school parties are like, right?

Big Fun

The Verger mansion was practically a castle. Built in the early 1900s, the stunning four-story abode boasted nine bedrooms, six bathrooms (a listing would say five and a half, since one was a powder room technically), seven fireplaces, and a spacious backyard, which the humble family of four had upgraded with a half-Olympic-sized swimming pool upon purchase. The colonial-style home retained much of its original charm, off-white stucco exterior and all. The interior, however, was fully updated and renovated, and Mr. Verger had installed solar panels last year (because "going green" was *sure* to appease the PETA protesters that harassed their company regularly).

It's historical splendor was, at that moment, completely overshadowed by the hundreds of hormonal teenagers strewn about, inside and outside. Walking up the walkway to the main door, one would see crushed beer cans littered about, cigarette butts haphazardly discarded, and one pair of torn underwear stuck in a bush. Before even opening the door, a casual observer would be able to hear the heavy bass pulsating and vibrating through the walls, and of course, the distinct smell of quality weed permeating the air. Upon opening said door, that same casual visitor would be smacked in the face with a cloud of smoke and blinded by flickering strobe lights. To the left, a gathering of students was engaged in a round of drinking/card games. To the right, a group of boys were egging on two girls into making out with each other (and the girls were happy to oblige).

Will and Abigail were together in the massive kitchen, which served as booze central for the evening. Mason and Margot's parents kept a very well stocked liquor cabinet and naturally had decent storage for wine. Abigail was teaching Will the proper technique for tequila shots.

"Okay, so shot, lime, salt?" Will inquired.

"No, it's salt, shot, *then* lime!" Abigail clarified, "Ready? One, two, three!"

Will and Abigail licked the salt from the back of their hands, downed the Patron, and sucked hard on the lime wedges.

Will coughed and snorted as the burn traveled roughly down his throat, "Okay, okay. Nope. That's it. I'm sticking with the whisky." He reached for the bottle and refilled the tumbler.

“You suck!” Abigail playfully nudged him.

“WILL!” a slurred voice boomed out from the doorway.

Franklyn stumbled his way over towards the two, nearly crashing into Abigail and pulling her down with him. Will yanked Franklyn’s hands away from her and propped the bulky man against the granite counter top, “Shit, Franklyn, I think you’re done tonight. You okay, Abigail?”

The youngest Shrike nodded once and retied her blue scarf that had come unraveled during the accidental assault.

“This is some party, eh?” Franklyn belched loudly, “Hey, have you guys seen Tobias?”

Will lifted the man up from his leaning position, spun him around gently and pushed him towards the glass patio doors, which lead out toward the back deck, “He’s probably by the pool.”

“Thank Will, you. I mean. Thanks,” Franklyn tottered out towards the pool.

Before Will could return to Abigail’s side (not that she minded, as the girl was already chatting up a few other girls who’d wandered on) he was hugged from behind by Beverly.

“Hey, my main man, Will Graham!” Bev planted a sloppy kiss on his cheek. Brian came around to Will’s other side, but did not plant an identical kiss.

“We didn’t think we would ever get you to ourselves, tonight!” Bev’s words were slowed and drawn out, “Those fuckin’ Shrikes hog you all the time.”

“And you were supposed to use your power to get us laid, Graham,” Zee added with genuine disappointment.

“You two are stoned out of your minds, aren’t you?” Will gathered.

“Not out of our minds, in our minds, Graham!” Zee expounded, “Want a hit?”

“No, I’m good.”

“Well, if you don’t have a joint in hand, then you should be double fisting some shots!” Bev indicated Will’s nearly empty glass of Jack Daniel’s, “Go get a refill! We’ll catch you later, Will!” Bev and Zee drifted back into the darkened parlor.

Will decided to follow their advice and poured himself another glass of whiskey. This was now his fourth in the few hours the party had been jumping, and he was feeling warm and loose and slightly horny. Downing the drink, he reached for the bottle to pour yet another. At the same time, the looming shadows of Garret and Mason descended.

“You seem to be enjoying yourself, Will,” Hobbs smiled cordially.

Will choked back the drink, “Fuck yeah, this is awesome. Mason! Having fun?”

Mason beamed, “Naturally! Thank my mom and dad for being chill as fuck. Oh! Will, have you met my baby sister, Margot?”

Will hadn’t noticed the shy, pale creature huddled next to Mason. Margot Verger, Mason’s “baby sister” by only a few minutes, was a porcelain doll with ruby red lips. Where Mason was curves and shadows, Margot was sharp edges and bright. She gave Will a coy smile, but said nothing in way of greeting. Will’s slowly growing state of inebriation couldn’t distract him from seeing that Mason kept one sweaty hand plastered to the nape of her neck. Her eyes were dull and listless and will felt a stab of pity for the docile woman, but said nothing.

“Margot, why don’t you go grab yourself a drink, to loosen up. Just one, though,” Mason released his hold on his twin, and she skittered away as quickly as possible without appearing rude.

“Will, we have something to show you,” Hobbs lowered his voice only slightly, the loud music aiding in the conspiracy, “Follow us.”

Will could feel that sudden spike of foreboding, but the soothing swirl of liquor in his gut drowned the sensation quickly.

Mason, followed by Hobbs, then Will, traveled through the house and up the grand staircase to the upper floor. Clusters of teens seeking to escape the crowds downstairs, or looking for a private corner for more intimate activities, paid the Shrikes little heed as they made their way down a long corridor. Stopping just before the end of the hallway, Mason opened up a door leading into one of the many bedrooms. The room was bathed in a soft, aqua blue light coming from one wall. One boy and one girl writhed messily on the king-sized bed, seeking out as much skin-to-skin contact as they could.

“Get the fuck out of here,” Mason slapped the girl’s bare ass, shocking the two into scrambling out into the hallway to search for another place to bang.

Mason and Hobbs approached the only source of light in the room, a large, almost wall-length aquarium filled with colorful pebbles and real aquatic plants and corals. The only occupant of the tank was a 120 centimeter (that’s four feet, because United States education system) long spotted, tiger snake moray eel.

“Beautiful, isn’t he?” Mason tapped on the glass, sending the beast scurrying into one of the many caverns. It emerged moments later, slithering menacingly back and forth through the water.

“Yeah… I guess. I mean, I’m more of a dog person,” Will mumbled, unsure of how to feel, with the room tilting just slightly if he stood in place too long.

“We’ve got big plans, for this baby, right Garret?” Mason looked to the leader eagerly.

Hobbs didn’t respond, but only continued to watch as the eel prowled its small home.

Will really needed another drink, and so excused himself silently from the bedroom and dashed back downstairs. Making his way toward the kitchen and the booze, he halted

suddenly when he spied the ever-elegant Margot Verger chatting with none other than Alana.

The two girls stood huddled close together, heads almost touching, near one of the many fireplaces. Both were all smiles, glowing almost, basking in each other's mere presence. Margot looked more alive than Will had thought possible, and Alana was flushed a sweet rose.

Will hurriedly wobbled over to them, the act of walking becoming a little more challenging thanks in part to the alcohol, and in part to the other students blocking his path.

"Will, hi there! I was wondering where you'd disappeared to," Alana pulled him into their now triangle of friendship, "I was just chatting with Margot about college prospects. Boring topic for a party, I know. Oh, but I just remembered, Margot, I wanted to thank you for the- "

"For throwing an awesome bash! Yeah! Me too, thanks," Will interjected loudly, surprising both Alana and Margot, "Yeah, we should probably thank your folks, actually, for letting us trash their place."

Alana shot Will a dirty glare at his course comment, "God Will, how drunk are you?"

"Some. I am some drunk," Will was unsure of what the proper term for his current level of intoxication was. Tipsy? Trashed? Wasted?

Margot giggled at his assessment, sweet and dainty. Alana's anger at Will subsided somewhat at seeing that Margot was not upset. Will breathed a rather obvious sigh of relief, but his peace was short lived.

"Well look who it is, Alana Bloom," the bitterness in Mason's voice was palpable, "Margot, I was unaware you two were acquainted."

Margot averted her gaze and politely said, "Mason, you know Alana and I are in a few classes together…"

"Indeed I do. Alana, I don't think we've ever had the pleasure of having you in our home! Perhaps you'd like a tour?" Mason leered.

Will saw Margot's eyes widen with fear, her mouth tightening to hold back some sort of warning. Will wanted to give her a chance to speak, but found himself being guided away from her by Garret and Abigail, who had rejoined them, as Mason lead Alana by the elbow back up the stairs. Abigail could barely contain her fits of giggles, as Hobbs shushed her lovingly. The mighty leader of the Shrikes said nothing. This was Mason's revenge, and he was welcome to be in control.

Will calmed a touch when the group didn't head towards the same bedroom that contained the eel. He was curious as to what designs Mason had for Alana. The gang came to a stop at a door Will hadn't recalled looking into. He heard murmuring behind him and noticed a small group of spectators had gathered.

"Oh! This is actually a surprise for guests, Alana," Mason oozed malice.

“So first, we have to blindfold you, okay?” Abigail did not wait for Alana’s reply, before she was tying a thin, black, silk scarf around Alana’s eyes.

“Um… I suppose that’s… fine…” Alana stammered, anticipation building.

Mason opened the door to what appeared to be a large bathroom, complete with an antique-style claw foot tub. Mason impatiently dragged Alana towards said tub, “Alright, just reach your hand forward…”

Will could hear the subtle movement of water coming from the bath, and glanced ahead. In the ceramic tub, the spotted moray eel prowled and thrashed angrily, having been kidnapped from its home and hastily deposited in the full tub.

“SHIT! ALANA, DON’T!” Will lunged forward and grabbed her wrist, ripped her roughly out of Mason’s grasp. He tore the blindfold away from Alana.

“Will, what- “

“Go home, Alana. Just go home,” Will commanded, not letting go of her fragile wrist.

Alana glanced back towards the bath where Mason, Hobbs, and Abigail were cackling uproariously. Spying the vicious sea serpent, Alana let out a horrified gasp, “Will! What is going on?” Her voice dripped fear.

“I'll explain everything later, just get out of here.”

Will watched dismally as Alana shoved her way past the disappointed students and out the front door.

“Fuck, Will, you ruined everything!” Mason stomped his foot down.

“No, fuck you, Mason,” Will twisted around, catching himself from falling forward before continuing his rant, “That was fucked up! Alana could have gotten seriously hurt!”

“Calm down, Will, it was just a harmless prank,” Abigail petitioned.

“No, it wasn’t. That’s it, I quit. I’m done. I’m out, turning in my papers,” Will unleashed his tirade as he popped a few buttons open on his shirt, sweat from nerves and the booze beginning to drench him.

As Will made a move to head towards the foyer, he was spun back around to face Abigail, “Will, come on, don’t be like that!”

Mason in all his fury, spun Will to face him, “Yeah, you fucking owe me for messing that up!”

“Guys, don’t spin me… I feel… like I am spilling,” Will swallowed harshly, the tell-tale pooling of saliva in his mouth warning him of impending doom.

He was whipped around once more to meet Hobbs, who had until that moment remained silent and composed.

“Sorry, Will,” Garret almost sounded truly regretful, “But you can’t just go back to being a nobody. Come Monday, you are an ex-somebody. Not even the other losers will touch you. You will be more alone than ever before. See?”

No, Will could not see. All Will could see was multiple blurry faces and swaying lights before he wrenched forward, heaving his guts out onto the cold tiled floor, a bit of it sloshing onto Mason’s shoes.

“FUCK! You’ll pay for that, you son of a bitch!”

“Lick it up, Mason,” Will spit once more and bolted past the onlookers, down the stairs, through the door, and out into the cool, all-encompassing night.

Dead Boy Walking

Chapter Notes

Longer chapter is long.

Alright, lovelies. I want to warn you. I have never written a sex scene before. Ever. You are getting a first taste! I hope it's okay (I mean, I got hot and bothered writing it, so...). As always, tips and critiques are always appreciated.

Also note: both Will and Hannibal are virgins, so they are forgoing a condom. But that doesn't mean you should! Always use protection!

Dead Girl Walking

The student body lining the hallways coldly stared down at Will from their perches – twisted, gnarled branches, bare of life and black like dried blood. Each face did not peer down at Will truly, for the faces were replaced with crystal clear mirrors, reflecting Will's own face back at him. As he meekly stumbled down the endless hallway, the mirrors began to crack and crumble, the fragments floating off into perpetual blackness like dying stars blinking out.

Will adjusted his glasses (when had he gotten those back?) *and fought to keeps his eyes fixed on his goal – his locker, which for some reason was red today instead of the regulation steel blue everyone else had. Reaching forward, Will pried open the locker door and was only a little surprised to see Abigail huddled inside. The young woman opened her mouth to speak, but only the rushing sound of water* (does water sound like cars passing by, sometimes?) *cascading out.*

Will stepped backwards and bumped into the imposing silhouette of Mason. The boy was too preoccupied stroking the lithe form of a floating moray eel to mind Will. The eel danced gracefully around Mason, baring its teeth in a gleeful grin. The monster skittered away from Mason and glided over towards Will, jaw unhinging and breathing the smell of alcohol and vomit towards Will.

Will gagged and toppled backwards. He wheeled around on hands and knees to see a pair of shiny, black loafers. Allowing his unfocused eyes to travel upwards, Will discovered the shoes connected to feet and then legs, and then then torso and hands and arms and face of Garret Jacob Hobbs.

"This is what you get, Will, when you defy me."

A bloodied hand reached out to caress Will's cheek. The warm, sticky fluid smelled of metal and despair and something else (gasoline?). *Will pulled away from the tender stroke of Hobbs' hand and retreated into the darkness.*

As Hannibal emerged from the mini-mart, delectable slush drink in hand, he was genuinely pleased to see the form of Will Graham move past him on unsteady gait, barreling down the street with no clear direction in mind.

"Will, destiny has other plans for us, I see," Hannibal flashed his most charming smile at Will. When the boy continued down the street with no acknowledgement, Hannibal was intrigued, "Will?"

He chucked the slushy beverage, unfinished unfortunately, into the waste bin and reached Will in a few quick strides. Without touching him, Hannibal observed Will's state: half-lidded eyes glazed over, a slight reddish tinge to the normally bright white dulling his baby blues; hair mussed, and curls clinging to his forward, damp with sweat; shirt partially undone, exposing a small tract of pale chest heaving with labored breath; one shoe, missing. The most telling indicator of all was the wretched aroma of cheap alcohol and vomit.

"Will, can you hear me?" Hannibal murmured into Will's ear – no response.

"Fascinating," Hannibal mused, "This way, Will. I shall take care of you."

"Will? Will, tell me your name and where you are."

"My name is Will Graham. It's sometime after midnight and I am… where… where am I?"

Will found himself seated on a soft mattress in a bedroom that was not his own. A single, ornamental lamp cast a warm, faint glow throughout, complementing the cherry woods and luxurious, dark fabrics that adorned the furniture pieces. The room was a mature person's bedroom, someone with elegance and class. Someone like,

"Hannibal, why am I in your bedroom?"

Hannibal sensed Will's trepidation, "Worry not, Will. I discovered you wandering alone near my backyard. I thought maybe you had sought me out, but clearly that was not the case. Judging by your state of dress and the smell, I suspect an alcohol-induced hallucination. They are usually auditory, but visual hallucinations are not outside the realm of possibility. I cleaned you up as best as I could without violating your person," Hannibal sat himself down in a large, plush armchair across from the bed, facing Will. "I snuck you in through my bedroom window, so as not to arouse suspicion, although I believe Uncle Robert may be asleep already."

Will was unconvinced, but appreciated the gesture all the same, "Thanks. Ugh!" He flopped backwards laying stretched back on the satin sheets, "Oh fuck, my head."

“Sit up, take these,” Hannibal passed a glass of water and two tiny, white aspirin to Will, who gulped them down willingly. “I take it the party was a rousing success?”

With crystal clarity, the night’s disaster flooded Will’s mind, “Oh fuck. Oh shit, no, no! Oh, Hannibal, I fucked up royally!” Will buried his head in his hands, fingers gripping his curls and pulling tightly, the pain grounding him slightly.

Will proceeded to describe what he could of the past few hours to Hannibal, who listened intently, with a perfect neutral expression designed to betray no emotion or judgement.

“I could use a good scream. I can feel one perched under my chin,” Will concluded his tale and collapsed back into a heap on the bed.

Hannibal rose up out of the chair and moved to sit beside Will on the bed, peering down at him, “Well, I would recommend not doing that at this hour. It is quite late. Perhaps it would be best if you stayed here for the night. I could prepare the guest room for you.”

Will blinked and looked up into Hannibal’s eyes – almost deep maroon in the dim light. He was still a little drunk, back down from terribly nauseous to only an unpleasant swimming sensation. His mind was a whirlwind of not tasty thoughts. Monday morning was less than 30 hours away. Will had a little more than a day before his life was over. The king of high school had decreed it, Will was a dead man. Escape was not an option. Not in the way one escapes from perilous predicaments in the movies, by slinking away under the cover of darkness. But, perhaps another kind of escape was presenting itself, dressed in chic, matching pajamas. Will had already made a plethora of bad decisions lately. What was one more?

Will extended one hand up and wrapped his fingers around the back of Hannibal’s head, feeling the silky strands of hair slipping through each digit, and pulled himself up to press his lips clumsily to the other boy’s. For what is was worth, Hannibal expressed no sign of shock or surprise. In fact, he didn’t give Will any indication whether or not his advances were welcomed.

Pulling back from the timid press of lips, Will waited for the inevitable reciprocation or fallout. Hannibal searched Will’s face before he quietly said, “Will, you are drunk- “

“So, you don’t want me?” Will interrupted, “I mean, that’s… that’s fine and all, I just thought- “

“No, Will. I do. I want you very much. I just do not want to take advantage of you in your current state.” Hannibal pulled Will up into a sitting position so that they could be eye to eye, rather than Hannibal towering over Will on the bed.

“You won’t be taking advantage of me. Look, Hannibal, I’m fucked up. Okay?” Will reached forward and took Hannibal’s hands in his own, “After tonight, the Shrikes are going to bury me alive. I just want… I feel like I’m fading. I feel unstable. I want to forget. For a minute. Please?”

Hannibal brought one hand up to Will’s face and caressed his cheek tenderly, “If that is what you really want, Will.”

Will pressed a gentle kiss into Hannibal's palm in response. Hannibal accepted this as permission, and leaned forward to meet Will. For all his bravado, Hannibal was surprisingly diffident, hesitating only a breath away from Will's face before finally, finally allowing their lips to meet. Will's eyes fluttered shut, long lashes tickling Hannibal's skin. Will's only experience in kissing prior to this moment had been Alana in junior high. He'd been curious, and Alana agreed to help him. They had snuck behind the bleachers after school one afternoon. Alana's lips had been sticky sweet with a candy-flavored lip-gloss. Will was not terribly impressed by the entire experience. It was nothing like in the movies, when the lovers would embrace with fiery passion, fireworks exploding in the background. Kissing Hannibal was nothing like the movies, either, but Will was infinitely more dazzled by the way the other young man lavished feather-light pecks across his lips, tracing his jaw, teasing at his exposed neck.

Will ducked down and sought to bring Hannibal's attentions away from his neck and back to his parched lips. Upon reclaiming his mouth, Will cautiously allowed his tongue to run over Hannibal's lips, tasting and testing and seeking permission. Hannibal granted Will entrance, parting his lips enough so that Will's tongue slipped inside. Hannibal tasted of cherry and lime and sugar and salt. Will feared for a moment that his taste, tainted from the night's episode, would deter Hannibal, but to Will's great relief, Hannibal licked back with equal, if not more enthusiasm.

Will felt himself being gently pulled down so that he and Hannibal laid side by side, facing each other, on the spacious bed. The wine-colored satin sheets felt cool against Will's cheek and soothed his fevered brow. The two boys continued to enjoy plundering each other's mouths for a time, and Hannibal allowed his hands to stroke Will's arms and sides and back. Will, in turn, massaged Hannibal's toned chest through the night shirt.

Breaking apart to catch his breath, Will noticed Hannibal had started to finish what Will had started earlier – unbuttoning the dress shirt. Will shifted up slightly to allow Hannibal to slip the shirt back off Will's shoulders. Hannibal trailed one finger down and across Will's smooth, pale chest. Will was struck by how reverently Hannibal touched him, the thought of those hands wrapping around his blossoming erection sending shivers down his spine. Will slipped out of the shirt completely and slid down the slippery sheets so that he was gazing up at the ceiling. Hannibal followed after, positioning himself above Will, hands braced on either side. He quickly sat up and removed his own garment in one fluid motion before returning down to place more kisses on Will's face and throat and chest, this time sucking slightly to pinkening the skin, marking his path.

Will let out a slight gasp. He clenched his fists tightly above his head, not wanting to reach out and interrupt Hannibal's worship. Hannibal snaked his way down to where Will was still clothed in his trousers. Hannibal traced the outline of Will's hard cock through the pants before working the button and zipper open. Will clenched his eyes tight, afraid that if he watched Hannibal disrobe him, he'd lose his nerve.

Will felt the mattress shift below him, weight lifting lightly. He flicked open his eyes to see Hannibal sliding down his own pants and flinging the two pairs to a forgotten corner of the room. As he returned to his place above Will, Will could feel Hannibal's throbbing prick brush against his own, and he squeezed his eyes shit once more.

“Will?”

His eyes flew open, seeing Hannibal admiring him from above, lust-filled eyes boring back into his own.

“Will, we can stop, if you are afraid. I am content with just this, should that be all you desire.”

Will sucked in a deep, astounded breath. He’d never be looked at or spoken to with such devotion, such adoration.

“No, I want to. I do. Hannibal,” Will leaned up and pressed his lips to Hannibal, all his desire focused in the hard, almost painful press of their mouths, “Please. The world is unfair. Make me forget it’s out there.”

That was all the motivation Hannibal needed. Returning Will’s kiss with greater fervor, he broke away and returned to where Will’s erection was still trapped, leaking into his briefs. Will sat up slightly to watch as Hannibal pulled back the elastic to let Will’s cock spring free, slapping against his belly with needy force. Discarding the underwear, Hannibal wrapped one calloused hand around Will’s cut cock, giving it a firm squeeze. A small bead of clear precum dribbled out. Hannibal leaned forward, breathing in Will’s musk like it was fine wine. Slowly, he licked clean the little mess that had pooled at the tip. After a few tiny pecks, Hannibal opened his mouth and gradually took in Will’s cock, pulling and sucking and swirling his tongue around each inch as he lowered himself down.

“Oh, God,” Will moaned and threw his head back down onto the pillow below him. It took every ounce of willpower not to run his hands through Hannibal’s ashen locks, to shove the teen down lower onto his prick, to not thrust upward into the warm, wet embrace of Hannibal’s perfect mouth.

Hannibal took Will as far into his mouth as he could go, using his hand to pump and stroke what he could not reach. He pulled back with a pop, saliva dripping down his chin from his administrations. Leaning above Will, Hannibal rummaged through the night stand next to the bed and withdrew a small tube of lubricant. Sitting back on his haunches, he poured a generous amount over his hands and fingers, most like more than was necessary. Returning to his position between Wills slender thighs, Hannibal started to spread the cheeks of his ass apart.

“Wait!” Will shouted.

Hannibal froze immediately, looking up with concern at Will.

“Have… have you ever… you know… done this before?”

Hannibal relaxed, the tension melting away, and grinned toothily at Will, “No. I have not. But I am aware of the mechanics. Now relax, Will. I want to make you feel good, to help you forget about everything but my hands, and mouth, and my prick.”

Hannibal slipped one lube-coated finger down between Will's crack and circled the tight pucker, clenched even tighter with eager anticipation.

"Breath, darling Will."

Hannibal felt the muscled ring loosen slightly and took the opportunity to push one digit in, ever so slowly. Will's virgin hole sucked him in greedily. Will let out a tiny whimper at the sudden, but not unwelcome, invasion. Not hearing any protest from the lithe, gorgeous boy, Hannibal started to move his finger gradually, in and out. Once he was confident, Hannibal added a second finger, and eventually a third, stretching Will's tight ass and reveling in each shudder and moan and cry.

"Does that feel okay, Will?"

"It… hurts, but," Will panted, savoring the stinging sensation, "But it feels really good, too. I want- I want more, Hannibal, oh, God."

Hannibal ignored Will's desperation, continuing to fuck him with his fingers, enjoying the stunning boy's every reaction. Hannibal had, during his ministration of Will, slipped his own underwear off with his free hand and lubed up his swelling cock, which was hard and thick and pulsing, precum spilling freely from the end.

Will could take no more. Pulling away from Hannibal's fantastic fingers, Will lunged forward and yanked Hannibal up towards him. In a flash of tongue and teeth and limbs, Will managed to roll Hannibal over onto his back and was now straddling the pleasantly shocked man.

"I need it, now, Hannibal!" Will demanded.

"Who am I to deny you your pleasure, then?"

Hannibal positioned his neglected cock up for Will. Will felt the press of the man's member to his hole. Swallowing down any hesitation, Will sank down, the tip breaching him. Hannibal's cock was far thicker than his three fingers had been, and Will stalled at the burning sensation that flooded him. With a grunt and a throaty moan, Will lowered himself gracelessly onto Hannibal's searing prick. Once he bottomed out, Will settled, wiggling slightly, adjusting to the delicious full feeling. To Hannibal's credit, he stayed motionless, allowing his lover to set the pace, drinking in the view of the pale, delectable god seated above him.

Will stared down at Hannibal, pupils blown wide with hunger. He began to rock slowly, lifting up a touch before grinding down seductively on Hannibal's lap.

"Mm, you are so tight, Will. You feel so good."

Will basked his Hannibal's praise and picked up his pace, starting to bounce steadily on Hannibal's cock. It wasn't a perfect rhythm, but the newness of it all stirred hot lust deep within both boys.

“Yes,” Hannibal allowed his hands to grip Will’s thighs, stroking and fondling at his leisure, “Just like that, baby.”

Will leaned forward, and whispered into Hannibal’s ear, “I'm going to ride you until I break you.”

With that, Will flew back up and began to ride Hannibal in earnest, skin slapping against skin, sweat dripping and flying in every direction. Hannibal returned Will’s zeal with his own, wrapping his hands around Will’s waist, fingertips pressing deep into the flesh of his ass, and helping the boy buck up and down the length of his engorged prick.

Both teens were close, each encouraging the other to completion with heavy moans and cries of “Yeah!”, “Harder!”, “Faster!”. With a few, final, upward thrusts into Will’s warm, wet hole, Hannibal came with silent, stilted breaths. Riding the waves of his own orgasm, he wrapped one hand around Will’s own hot dick and stroked it with a pained fury. Will found his own release in Hannibal’s hand shortly thereafter, streaks of hot, white come painting Hannibal’s tanned stomach. With a final wail of pleasure, Will collapsed onto Hannibal, purposefully blind to the mess. Hannibal wrapped his arms around Will and held him tightly. The two boys laid there, relishing in the afterglow, all the horrors of the world forgotten.

The Me Inside of Me

Chapter Notes

To anyone who ever read this or commented or left a Kudos, I just want to apologize. I never meant to go this long without updating. Life got it the way as it often does - work in particular was brutal. But I know the pain of enjoying a story and then it never coming to completing.
So I'm back and plan to finish this story up. Comments and critiques appreciated as always.

Reminder, I am basing this fic off of the musical version, more so than the film version, so I am including a link to the song the inspires each chapter.

The Me Inside of Me

Will Graham's eyes slowly pulled open, the dim light of dawn peeking through the crack in the thick, black curtains. He felt a heavy weight pressed to his back. Glancing over his shoulder, Will could just make out the chiseled features and slightly mussed hair of Hannibal. The foreign kid was stoic and silent even in slumber, the only sign of life the subtle push of his chest against Will as his heart beat steadily. Letting out a contented sigh, Will turned away to continue to watch the light increase in intensity as day broke. His heart stopped when, upon rolling over, he spied Garret Jacob Hobbs looming over him.

Will tried to bolt upright, but found himself paralyzed, prone there on the bed, "HOBBS!" he shouted, "What the fuck are you doing here?"

"I am like oxygen, Will. I'm everywhere. So, you fucked this weirdo? Just when I thought you couldn't sink any lower, Will. Abigail will be so disappointed," Garret sighed.

"Why can't you just leave me alone!?" Will begged, still motionless and struggling to regain control.

Hobbs looked truly brokenhearted, watching Will fight and beg. Will watched as the dispassionate figure faded into shadow, until only a pair of unmoving eyes remained.

"Will," the voice echoed out from the darkness, beckoning to him.

"No! NO! Please don't do this!"

"Will."

Will let out an anguished sob.

"Will!"

"Will, dearest, wake up!"

Will bolted upright, nearly tumbling from the bed, held in place by the tangled bed sheets and Hannibal's firm but gentle embrace. Frantically taking in his surroundings, Will fought desperately to get his breathing under control. As flashes of the night before pushed their way into his mind's periphery, he was able to finally take in several deep breaths, his skin cooling and the nightmare sweat drying.

"Good, good. Just like that."

Hannibal's dulcet tones certainly helped. Will allowed himself to collapse slightly, head rolling into crook of Hannibal's neck. Will let himself pull the boy's natural perfume into his lungs. Underneath the stale scent of sex was Hannibal's own musk. It was heady and earthy, a calming forest for Will to get lost in.

"Sorry… it was just a nightmare, I think," Will mumbled from his crumpled position in Hannibal's arms.

"No apologies necessary, Will," Hannibal ran his fingers deftly through Will's tangled mess of hair, careful not to tug as he worked the knots free, continuing in a rhythmic motion, "Care to divulge the contents of said nightmare?"

Will shook his head and said nothing. They remained in comfortable stillness for a moment longer before Will reluctantly pulled away.

"I need to go and beg forgiveness from Garret," Will announced with all the confidence of a snail, "Maybe I can convince him to just let me go back to regular reject status, rather than complete pariah."

Hannibal's eyes narrowed, "Must you really grovel before a creature who, despite all pretense, is less than you? Weaker?"

"Look," Will forced himself to look Hannibal in the eyes, finding it so much easier with him than anyone else, "I understand what you mean, but you don't know what it was like for me before. I was a nobody and my life was a living hell. You can't imagine what it will be like once the Shrikes denounce me in front of everyone. It's a practical death sentence. I… I couldn't… Hannibal. I'm not strong like you." Will struggled to blink back the tears starting to well up and the consequences of his actions last night became clearer. He trembled slightly as the weight pressed down upon him.

Hannibal pulled Will back to his chest, allowing the young man to listen to the gentle drum of his heart, "I beg to disagree. You are very strong, Will. More so than you realize. However, if

you feel this is something you must do, then I shall support you. We will head over to the Hobbs' residence right away."

Will sniffled quietly, a tiny imperceptible smile dancing on his face, "Thanks, Hannibal."

An hour or so later, following a rather indulgent shower in Hannibal's impressively large bathroom (in which a few more charming kisses were shared), Will, dressed in one of Hannibal's sweaters, and Hannibal strode up to the Hobbs residence. Not nearly as grand as the Verger place, the house possessed a rustic charm rarely found this close to Baltimore proper. All was quiet as Will hesitantly rang the doorbell. Hannibal kept a pace back, but left his hand lingering on the small slope of Will's back, feeding into him reassurances and devotion.

Several seconds of restless waiting later, the door creaked open to reveal a bleary-eyed Garret Jacob Hobbs. Despite the obvious hangover, Hobbs still exuded a menacing presence Will found himself shrinking from. The bloodshot eyes peering out from Will, to Hannibal, and back, only fueled Will's fear. The quiet continued, even as Garret indicated the couple should follow him inside. They made their way into a parlor, where Garret nonchalantly flopped down into a well-loved leather arm chair.

A few more moments of stillness passed with neither party making the first move. Will opened his mouth to blurt out something, anything, but was interrupted by the King Shrike himself.

"I assume you are here to apologize for your behavior last night?" His voice was composed, not bitter or crude at all.

Will tried to vocalize some semblance of a sentence, but could only nod. Hannibal, his eyes scoping in every detail of the room, said nothing.

Hobbs sighed, "I have to go pick Abi up from Marissa's later and my head is killing me. You can start making it up to me by fixin' me a prairie oyster."

"A... a what?"

"It's a-"

"An old fashioned hangover cure," Hannibal interrupted Garret smoothly. Normally such intrusion he would find rude, but considering the circumstances, Hannibal felt compelled to keep Will and Hobbs' interaction to a minimum. "If you would kindly point us in the direction of your kitchen, I will assist Will in the preparation."

Hobbs closed his eyes an slowly gestured towards the kitchen. Hannibal gingerly grabbed Will by the elbow and led his panicked lover into the decent-sized room. Will paced restlessly back and forth, wearing an invisible line into the tiled floor. Hannibal, meanwhile, fetched a plethora of ingredients from various cabinets.

Noticing Will's discontent, Hannibal began to explain the cocktail, "A mixture of Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce - typically tabasco - salt, pepper, tomato juice. Mixed together thoroughly, and then a single raw egg is cracked into it. Careful not to break the yolk. Thus, when ingested, the texture is similar to that of an oyster. Instant hangover cure, although it hardly has a scientific backing."

Will eyed the bizzare combination of ingredients to be placed all together in a ceramic mug. Hannibal wasn't sure if the boy had heard a single word since they'd entered the kitchen. Meeting Will's eyes finally, he smirked and placed one last bottle near the mug - it was a red, plastic jug of chemical drain opener.

Will stared at the bottle for what seemed an eternity before sighing, "Not funny."

"Oh," Hannibal unscrewed the lid, taking a quick whiff of the potent poison, "I thought it rather amusing, actually."

"I'm here to apologize, not commit murder, no matter how tempting," Will muttered, crossing his arms in front of his chest, "We're supposed to be making a hangover cure."

"Quite right. It would certainly aid in dispensing his hangover, as he would be dead," Hannibal chuckled, setting the bottle back down, and beginning to add the salt, pepper, and other liquids to the coffee cup. "Will, could you please grab me one egg from the refrigerator?"

Will opened the fridge, back to Hannibal, and scoured around until he spotted the egg carton near the back. Bringing one egg out, he spun around to find Hannibal placing the bottle of drainer fluid back under the sink where it belonged. He passed the egg to Hannibal, who cracked it expertly into the solid mug. Hannibal handed Will his creation with a flourish, "Voila. A perfectly prepared prairie oyster. Now you may grovel before your lord and master and beg forgiveness."

Will's eyes narrowed at Hannibal. The disappointment in Hannibal's voice stung. But how could he possibly understand? Hannibal was new and cool, and strong. Thick skinned. Before coming to the United States, Will doubted he'd ever experienced torment like Will had. Will wasn't as brave as Hannibal. He couldn't face another year of this brutal high school torture. Getting Garret to forgive him and let him go back to being merely ignored would be mercy. So Will said nothing, merely wrenched the coffee cup from Hannibal's grasp and strode back to where Hobbs was waiting.

Hobbs had his head cradled in one hand, shielding his eyes from the light. Will placed the cup down in front of him on the coffee table and stepped back. Hannibal appeared behind him, startling Will slightly. They both waited in the ensuing silence.

Eventually, Hobbs spoke, "Alright. Go on. Beg for my forgiveness."

Will stood motionless a moment longer, swallowing through the tightness in his throat, "Garret, I... I'm s-sorry. About. Things that happened. Last night. But I... I stand by what I did. Alana... she didn't deserve that."

"Maybe you're right, Will," Hobbs didn't stir, head still relaxed in one hand, "Alana's a nice girl. My Abi likes her fine, but this was Mason's decision and I have to stand by him. Will. I like you, really I do. But come Monday," Hobbs reached half-blindly for the mug and without really looking, gulped it down in one swig, "Come Monday, you're dead."

Garret looked up at Will. Their eyes, two disparate shades of blue, met for one brief moment. And then, without warning, Garret began to cough and sputter. Lunging up from the chair, he clutch at his chest and heaving gasps wracked his form. Will stepped back, bumping into Hannibal, who curled his arms around Will's slender form and watched, enraptured by the display.

Hobbs began to wretch, a foamy liquid dripping from his mouth and oozing onto the table he now grasped, white-knuckled. The vomit came once, twice, a third time. The third purge had small, imperceptible flecks of red sprinkled throughout. And then, just like that, Hobbs collapsed forward into the pool of his own bodily fluids. His breath heaved a few more times, before stillness took over.

Garret Jacob Hobbs, leader of the Shrieks, was dead.

In the aftermath of the noisy dance of death, the eerie silence was palpable. Hannibal and Will both looked on in stunned awe.

Will spun around and slammed his fist into Hannibal's chest, "OH MY FUCKING GOD, HE'S DEAD! YOU KILLED HIM! YOU KILLED MY FRIEND."

"*We* killed your enemy, Will," Hannibal allowed the hits a few times before grabbing Will's wrists and preventing the shocked boy from struggling further, "And it was an accident I assure you. Some must have dripped into the mug when I was cleaning up."

"ACCIDENT OR NOT-"

"Will, my love, stop screaming. I would hate for you to have an anxiety attack at this moment."

"ACCIDENT OR NOT," Will continued his tirade, "The cops are gonna think I did this! I can't go to jail, Hannibal. Oh god, my dad... My life is over. What am I gonna do?" Will's voice finally lowered as tears began to well in his eyes and his throat tightened with fear.

"You are going to do what you do best, my dear," Hannibal cradled Will to his chest, the assault halted by grief. He planted a tender Kiss to Will's temple, "You are going to give Garret Jacob Hobbs a hero's ending."

"What?"

"Look," Hannibal spun Will around slowly and nodded toward the coffee table, where a now ruined copy of Sylvia Plath's "The Bell Jar" lay.

Will saw it, but the idea didn't click, "I don't understand. What's the book got to do with anything?"

Hannibal had left Will's side momentarily and returned with a paper and pen, "Mr. Hobbs was a deeply troubled soul, underneath his cool facade. And when no one could see into the depths of his dark heart, he took his own life in a most gruesome manner."

Will stared down at the proffered paper and pen, "You want me to forge a suicide note?"

"With that brilliant imagination, William, I am sure it would be quite easy for you. Make it believable enough, and the authorities will have no doubts and will not suspect foul play," Hannibal gently nudged the writing tools into Will's somewhat limp grasp and maneuvered him out of the room (which was quickly beginning to smell something awful) and set him to task at the kitchen counter. "Make him sound tortured, a shell of a man hiding away a darker creature. Discuss his love for Abigail, perhaps, as a source of both joy and frustration."

Will's eyes seemed glazed over as he looked down at the blank paper. His skills as a forger had gotten him into this hell, surely it would be the way out?

He began to write: "Dear world, believe it or not I knew about fear. I knew how loneliness stung. I hid behind smiles and popularity."

Hannibal nodded, soothing his hands down Will's arms gently in an attempt to coax some of the tension from him, "That is good."

"I am more than parties and good grades and light," Will glanced up over his shoulder to look at Hannibal, taking comfort in his presence. He continued on "No one could see the me inside of me."

Will continued on, scribbling furiously, his thoughts swirling and mixing with those of Hobbs, the truth behind a cousin's deep, almost insatiable urge to protect the one he loved, but being unable to do so for fear of ostracizing himself and her. Hobbs couldn't follow Abigail forever, certainly not after graduation. Despite the letter being a fake, Will could see bits and pieces of honesty behind what he wrote. As the "suicide" note came to a close, Will took one last look back through the open archway of the kitchen towards the sitting room where the body of Garret lay cooling.

Will could swear Garret Jacob Hobbs blinked and smiled at him.

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Garret Jacob Hobbs' body was discovered by his parents later that evening. The cops were called, the note found, and thanks to the head of the newspaper club, Freddie Lounds, a copy of it was somehow retrieved and circulated throughout the school come Monday morning.

Dr. Chilton argued with Principal Crawford about getting the students mandatory counseling. A fight he, unfortunately, won. It was at one of these sessions during the week of mourning, that Will was somewhat surprised to see that many people now saw Hobbs in quite a different light since his death. He was martyr, a saint, a misunderstood product of the times, and on and on.

Will didn't see Hobbs as some victim or some idol or anything like that. What was he supposed to tell people?

Instead, dreaming or awake, Will just saw Hobbs.

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